THE ART OF LAUGHING.

SOMETHING WHICH CONSISTS OF UNCOMELY FACIAL CONTORTION.

John B. Gough's Best Thing—How a Dog Laughs—The Jolly Family Doctor. Lincoln and the Laughing Spot—Washington—Our Humorists.

Why is it people don't like to be laughed at? What is laughter anyway? Apparently a very innocent affair; a muscular contortion—rarely a comely twist of the features. Could you imagine anything more laughable than to have Charles Sumner and Tom Corwin brought into social contact for an hour? Sumner always felt of a joke as he would the handles of a battery, and the result was a shock. He hated a joker. Corwin was coruscating with wit and fun in spite of himself. He was the greatest statesman and wit combined the country has ever produced. He died at last as you have seen a vast discharge of rockets flashing and illuminating, and then suddenly all was darkness forever. Lincoln, however, was more grim. He was not so royally a laugher as Corwin. But what would you give to see the span in Paradise?

ART OF MAKING LAUGHTER.

John B. Gough's best thing was to tell an audience that he intended very soon to make them laugh—laugh at something silly. He gave them preparatory notice that what he was going to say amounted to nothing; was not worth laughing at; yet they would all laugh themselves tired. Then he went on coolly to do it. And they always did laugh; and then looked at each other to see what they were laughing at. No one ever found out, and John said to them: "I told you so." He had the art of making laughter. He was not himself a good laugher by any measure. In private he was decidedly a sober, matter-of-fact man.

There is not an animal that I know of that does not try to laugh, and make some approach to it, only none of them have as good laughing muscles as we have. It is partly a matter of cheeks. But what a jolly affair a dog is when his master comes home! He splits up a roaring laugh between his head and tail. Between the two his whole body is contorted into grins that finally work off as barks. They say wild dogs do not bark. It is because they do not laugh.

You should always have for a family doctor a man who can laugh. A laugh once saved my life. It never is so useful as by way of medicament. My doctor tells a good story and has a genuine smile. Smiles are generally not genuine. They are mostly grins half smothered. When your doctor looks cheerful and hopeful, you catch it of him. Lincoln, bearing the country on his heart in hours of disaster, fortunately could laugh. Gen. W. Julian tells us that when Lincoln approached the laughing spot, in a good story, he would lift his left foot to his right knee, and clinching his foot with both hands and bending forward, his whole frame convulsed with his sensations of delight.

WHEN WASHINGTON LAUGHED.

Washington is never known to have laughed but once. It was at Valley Forge. He had ordered that whoever, officer or private, got drunk should be compelled to cut a stump in pieces. Where the camp was formed these stumps were overabundant. One morning while making his tour of observation he came upon a soldier who was chopping out the very last stump. Washington called to him pleasantly, "Well, good fellow, you have found the last stump!" "Yes, sir," growled the man, "and now when an officer gets drunk there won't be a stump left for him." The general laughed heartily and looked at his officers as if there were some of them entitled to feel relief.

Carlyle, in "Sartor Resartus," tells of laughter that takes in the whole man from head to heels. There are as many styles of laughter as there are laughers. One begins slowly, the fun gently creeps out along the risible muscles; then the hands fly up, the feet fly out and the mouth flies open. This man becomes the victim of a joke, for it is very difficult to stop when he gets to a reasonable maximum. Tom Jones—that is not his name, but that makes no difference here—never laughs without such a rush of blood to his head that I am afraid for his life.

Laughter is as much a matter of style as language. There is an eastern laugh, slightly conservative, and curved up at the ends, with culture. There is a western laugh, that is broad, full, unreserved, open and hilarious. The Englishman's laugh is self-conscious and more or less inconsiderate. The Frenchman's laugh is considerate and courteous. Dickens' laughter is wholly unlike Thackeray's. You can never quite avoid feeling that Thackeray's laugh is personal; he laughs at you. Of all the laughters alive there is none equal in good fellowship to Dr. Holmes. There should be a bit of pathos in a sound laugh. Bret Harte has it. Of all the humorists by profession only M. Quad has it.—Cor. Globe-Democrat.

Legs Worth More than Brains.

My young friend—John Smith, for instance—who was graduated by a university a few weeks ago, and who rushed into "journalism," as he called it, came into my room yesterday afternoon, fanned himself vigorously with his hat and remarked:

"I shall quit this business!"

"You mean you will leave the newspaper business?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied; "the truth is, newspapers pay more for legs than they do for brains."

"Do you mean that you have more brains than legs?" I asked, with affected surprise.

"I mean that I have walked four miles in the hot sun trying to run down a rumor and I won't pan out five lines."

So Smith is going to quit the newspaper business because he has brains to sell, when the newspapers want nothing but legs. Of course Smith's place will have to be filled. That is, a man will have to be put on when Smith vacates. The man who stays on will have legs, but he will have brains also. He will know, first, what news is. That will require brains. Knowing what news is, Smith's successor will get that news and he will get it quickly. That will require not only legs, but it will require a perseverance and persistence that regards neither distance, difficulties nor circumstances. Journalism is one thing, but the newspaper business is altogether something different.—Atlanta Constitution.

The Egyptian Lotus.

The Egyptian lotus among the water lilies at the display in Central park, New York city is attracting much attention. The large flowers, with their different tints of white and red, with the bud in the form of a tea rose opening out into a cluster of petals nearly a foot in diameter, massed among solid looking leaves, are much admired by the aesthetic citizens of that locality.—Chicago Times.

The Chinese as Sailors.

The steamers on the Pacific are all manned by Chinese, who make very good, willing, sturdy, good natured sailors, so long as they are well officered. These vessels are built for freight, not passenger, service, and, consequently, the speed and equipment are different from those of the "Atlantic greyhounds." —Chicago Herald.

IN HARBOR.

I think it is over, over,
I think it is over at last,
Voices of poem and lover,
The sweet and the bitter have passed;
Life, like a tempest of ocean,
Hath outblown its ultimate blast.
There's but a faint sobbing seaward,
While the calm of the tide deepens leeward,
And behold, like the welcoming quiver,
The heart-pulses throbbed through the river—
Those lights in the harbor at last,
The heavenly harbor at last.

I feel it is over! over!
For the winds and the waters surcease;
Ah, few were the days of the rover
That smiled in the beauty of peace!
And distant and dim was the omen
That hinted redress or release
From the ravage of life and its riot.
What marvel I yearn for the quiet
Which bides in the harbor at last?
For the lights with their welcoming quiver
That throb through the sanctified river
Which girdles the harbor at last,
The heavenly harbor at last.

—Paul H. Hayne.

SYSTEM OF SOLAR TELEGRAPHY.

Military Signals in Use in Arizona—Communication by Sun Flashes.

In December last Lieut. A. M. Fuller, of the Second United States cavalry, with his troop, K, left the Presidio for field duly in Arizona, where he has since been stationed. For the first four months after leaving the lieutenant was with his troop, but soon after Gen. Miles succeeded Gen. Crook, Fuller was assigned to special duty as acting signal service officer in the heliographic service of the army. To a reporter he explained the method of army signaling by means of reflecting sunlight. The alphabet used is exactly the same as the Morse telegraph alphabet. The instruments and mirrors used in signaling are of the finest material. Under Lieut. Fuller fifteen signaling stations have been established in Arizona, the distance between them varying from five to forty miles, according as convenient peaks were found on which to locate stations. The greatest distance in a straight line which stations cover is 200 miles. The regular working force of each station is two at the smaller and three operators at the larger stations, with a guard of from five to seven soldiers, according to the location of the station. The stations more remote from the railroad are supplied with couriers, and orders from Gen. Miles to the different detachments in the field are thus conveyed.

So perfected is this system of communication by sun flashes that a trial message of twenty-five words was sent recently over the 200-mile line and an answer of the same length received at the starting point in twenty minutes' time. Another test which Lieut. Fuller said resulted very satisfactorily to Gen. Miles was signaling 300 words twenty-five miles in a short space of time.

In New Mexico there are seven additional signal stations, under Lieut. E. E. Dravo of the Sixth cavalry. A recent message of twenty-five words was signaled from Gen. Miles at Tubac, A. T., to Lake Valley, 400 miles, and an answer of twenty-seven words returned in four hours and ten minutes' time. Lieut. Fuller says that Gen. Miles has expressed satisfaction with the rapid manner in which messages are signaled from station to station.—San Francisco Call.

Beecher and His Money.

Beecher hates all monetary details. He always gives his regular salary—$20,000—to his wife, who disposes of it as she chooses, entirely independent of him. What he earns outside by lecturing, writing, etc.—varying annually from $15,000 to $20,000 more—is for his own use, and he uses it freely in any and every way except for the liquidation of debts. Surprise has often been expressed as to what the popular preacher does with his large income. This information may aid in a measure to answer the question. He is an odd creature, as men of genius frequently are, with exalted virtues and grave defects, whom very few understand, and who certainly does not understand himself. Like other popular idols, he has been painted with the hues of imaginations until his real nature has ceased to be visible. Some of his best qualities are probably those of which the orthodox class would be the least tolerant. Above everything, he is human—human to the core—and not akin to saintship is his antipodes, which he is ready to avow. His most valiant mental attribute is his oratory, which, though accidentally turned in the direction of the pulpit, has not been by any means confined thereto. As a preacher, taking him on the whole, I doubt if this age has produced his equal.—"Pessimo" in Chicago Times.

Some Startling Theories.

A local statistician, starting with the premise that, given a single pair of sparrows and their own sweet will, at the end of the year there would be six pairs of sparrows, the parent birds dying at the end of each year; insists that at the end of fifteen years there would be 2,821,109,907,456 pairs of sparrows descended from the original pair. Without examining the correctness of this figuring, which may be right enough as to its arithmetic, any sparrow old enough to have a family on his hands knows that it is mad wrong in comparison with actual results. There is to be taken into the account the ravages of other birds, of cats, of boys, of sportsmen, of indigestion, of wars civil and foreign, of floods and beating winds, and the awful visitations of cold. The sparrows multiply and replenish the earth, it is true, but it keeps them very busy. An arithmetician who, beginning with Adam and Eve, and allowing two pairs to a family, should attempt to find the population of the earth by a process of arithmetical progression would have the land and the sea piled mountain high with the bones of past generations, and enough live people on the earth to over-populate all the rest of the planets. Statistics without all the data to bring on right conclusions are very good for nothing.—Philadelphia Record.

Americans in Paris.

Always conspicuous by their affability, pretty toilettes and a certain peaceful independence of manner are the Americans, by far the most popular of all the strangers with the Paris public. They possess the two essentials to French favor—politeness and pelf. Always floating in a delightful nimbus of gold, they emerge from a distant mine, or oil well, or ranche to shower smiling prosperity upon the meritorious population with whom a "Thank you" goes—well, not quite but almost as far as recklessness in the disbursement of small coin.

In no place is the difference so striking between English, French and American girls, nor are their self-reliance, judgment and simplicity so strongly contrasted as here, where the upper classes of the three nations meet in the same social stratum, but with a difference of education, of development and tradition as wide as the seas which forever separate their different shores. And let it be frankly confessed, with all pardonable satisfaction, that in almost every respect the American girl of to-day is in advance of her Saxon and Gallic sisters.—Paris Cor. Philadelphia Press.

They Look Very Cute.

In Sarah Winnemucca's Indian school out west, the children are all dressed in "Mother Hubbard's." The little Piutes are said to look very cute in those strange and wonderful costumes.—New York Graphic.